

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-24 (canceled)

25. (previously added) An isolated polypeptide containing the amino acid sequence represented by SEQ ID NO:24; or containing (i) an amino acid sequence represented by SEQ ID NO:24, of which one or more amino acids are deleted, (ii) an amino acid sequence represented by SEQ ID NO:24, to which one or more amino acids are added, (iii) an amino acid sequence represented by SEQ ID NO:24, into which one or more amino acids are inserted, (iv) an amino acid sequence represented by SEQ ID NO:24, in which one or more amino acids are substituted by other amino acids, or (v) an amino acid sequence represented by SEQ ID NO:24 containing a combination of the modifications described in the above (i) to (iv), and having a biological activity substantially equivalent to that of the polypeptide having the amino acid sequence shown by SEQ ID NO:24; or its amide or ester; or a salt thereof.
26. (previously added) The polypeptide, its amide or ester, or a salt thereof, according to claim 25, which contains the amino acid sequence represented by SEQ ID NO:6; or which contains (i) an amino acid sequence represented by SEQ ID NO:6, of which one or more amino acids are deleted, (ii) an amino acid sequence represented by SEQ ID NO:6, to which one or more amino acids are added, (iii) an amino acid sequence represented by SEQ ID NO:6, into which one or more amino acids are inserted, (iv) an amino acid sequence represented by SEQ ID NO:6, in which one or more amino acids are substituted by other amino acids, or (v) an amino acid sequence represented by SEQ ID NO:6 containing a combination of the modifications described in the above (i) to (iv), and has a biological activity substantially equivalent to that of the polypeptide having the amino

acid sequence shown by SEQ ID NO:6.

27. (previously added) The polypeptide or its amide or ester, or a salt thereof, according to claim 25, which contains the amino acid sequence represented by SEQ ID NO:26.
28. (previously added) The polypeptide or its amide or ester, or a salt thereof, according to claim 26, which contains the amino acid sequence represented by SEQ ID NO:12.
29. (previously added) The polypeptide or its amide or ester, or a salt thereof, according to claim 25, which contains the amino acid sequence represented by SEQ ID NO:49.
30. (previously added) The polypeptide or its amide or ester, or a salt thereof, according to claim 26, which contains the amino acid sequence represented by SEQ ID NO:47.
31. (previously added) An isolated nucleic acid comprising a nucleic acid having a base sequence encoding the polypeptide according to claim 25.
32. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid according to claim 31, wherein the base sequence encoding the polypeptide according to claim 25 is the base sequence represented by SEQ ID NO:23.
33. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid according to claim 31, wherein the base sequence encoding the polypeptide according to claim 25 is the base sequence represented by SEQ ID NO:4.
34. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid according to claim 31, wherein the base sequence encoding the polypeptide according to claim 25 is the base sequence represented by SEQ ID NO:25.

35. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid according to claim 31, wherein the base sequence encoding the polypeptide according to claim 25± is the base sequence represented by SEQ ID NO:10.
36. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid according to claim 31, wherein the base sequence encoding the polypeptide according to claim 25± is the base sequence represented by SEQ ID NO:48.
37. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid according to claim 31, wherein the base sequence encoding the polypeptide according to claim 25± is the base sequence represented by SEQ ID NO:46.
38. (currently amended) A pharmaceutical composition comprising the polypeptide, its amide or ester, or a salt thereof, according to claim 25± and a pharmaceutical carrier.
39. (currently amended) The polypeptide according to claim 25±, wherein the biological activity comprises one or more of: expression in cartilage tissue, induction of cartilage differentiation, induction of proliferation of a cell in which the polypeptide is expressed, and binding to an antibody which specifically binds to a polypeptide according to SEQ ID NO. 6, 12, 24, 26, 47 and 49.
44. (currently amended) A method for manufacturing the polypeptide or its amide or ester, or a salt thereof, according to claim 25±, which comprises culturing a transformant transformed with the recombinant vector comprising a DNA having a base sequence encoding the polypeptide according to claim 25±, and producing the polypeptide.
45. (currently amended) A reagent for screening a compound or its salt that promotes or inhibits the activity of the polypeptide or its salt according to claim 25±, which comprises the

polypeptide, its amide or ester, or a salt thereof, according to claim 25~~4~~, wherein the polypeptide comprises a label.

46. (currently amended) A kit for screening a compound or its salt that promotes or inhibits the activity of the polypeptide, its amide or ester, or a salt thereof, according to claim 25~~4~~, comprising the polypeptide or its salt according to claim 25~~4~~ and a reagent for measuring a biological activity of the polypeptide.

REMARKS


The supplemental amendment is made to correct claim dependencies in claims 32-37, and 39-46. The amendment does not introduce new matter.

CONCLUSION

Applicants submit that all claims are allowable as written and respectfully request early favorable action by the Examiner. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conversation with Applicants' attorney would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is cordially invited to call the undersigned attorney of record.

Respectfully submitted,

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